

# **Request for Information**

## **Portal Software and Federated Search Engine for Kentucky Virtual Library**

**Prepared by the  
Kentucky Virtual Library**

**February 27, 2004**

The **Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL)** is issuing this Request for Information (RFI) to gain knowledge concerning current capabilities of vendors to provide software for development and maintenance of a new library federated search portal. The information gained from this process will be used to aid in development of a Request for Proposal to select one or more partners to provide services to KYVL.

Based, in part, upon these written responses, it is anticipated that between five and eight vendors will be invited make a presentation and to participate in an oral discussion of their capabilities. The RFI sessions will be held in Frankfort, Kentucky at the Kentucky Virtual Library office. Each vendor session will be approximately 1.5 hours, including time for questions and answers.

Vendors that do not participate in the RFI process, or oral discussions, may still be invited to participate in the formal Request for Proposal process when it is conducted.

Written responses to the RFI should be no more than 15 pages in length. Attachments are allowed but may not be reviewed. Responses are due at the KYVL office by 12:00 noon on 29 March 2004.

Send responses to:  
Enid Wohlstein, Director  
Kentucky Virtual Library  
1024 Capital Center Drive  
Suite 320  
Frankfort KY 40601-8204

## **1 KYVL Background**

The **Kentucky Virtual University (KYVU)**, created with passage of the Kentucky Postsecondary Education Improvement Act of 1997, is "to be a student-centered, technology-based system for coordinating the delivery of postsecondary education that meets the needs of citizens and employers across the Commonwealth." The mission for the **Kentucky Virtual Library (KYVL)** is to ensure that "all Kentuckians will have equitable access to quality library and information resources and qualified, well-trained staff to support the Kentucky Virtual University as well as meet broader needs for learning, working and living". The primary focus for the KYVL is to provide the same level of library services to distance learners as those provided for residential or traditional students. Central to this distributed system is the collaboration and cooperation of all types of libraries to deliver information resources and services to students, regardless of location.

The Kentucky Virtual Library offers licensed electronic databases of citations, abstracts and full text journal articles, which are accessible to all registered students and public library patrons, as well as to the users of KYVL's various member communities. Since November of 1999, the KYVL has provided access to a core set of over 40 electronic article and citation databases, including over 7000 full text journals, to users of

Kentucky libraries. This has enabled all users to have equitable access to electronic resources through the Internet. Access is controlled by IP authentication and ID/Password.

The KYVL also supports and coordinates the Endeavor Consortium for Kentucky by funding and facilitating the multi-hub Endeavor Voyager library management system. The fourteen participating academic and special libraries share Voyager, which is housed on two hub sites. Through the participation in the consortium, member libraries achieve the benefits of the best possible services at a lower cost than if implementing or maintaining a library management system independently.

To further support resource sharing and delivery of information resources, the KYVL contracts for and coordinates a ground courier delivery service to provide delivery of Interlibrary Loan requests between participating libraries within Kentucky.

KYVL provides many free resources such as the "How to Do Research" tutorial for adults, the specially designed "KYVL for Kids" site (on which children can learn how to find and use information by following Spacedog), access to a number of Kentucky library catalogs, annotated subject-specific website lists, and many other tools. KYVL also provides financial support for the Kentuckiana Digital Library, a project with the mission of creating a permanently available digital collection of Kentucky-oriented historic materials.

## **1.1 KYVL Mission and Goals**

### **1.1.1 Mission**

All Kentuckians will have equitable access to quality library and information resources and qualified, well-trained staff to support the Kentucky Virtual University as well as meet broader needs for learning, working, and living.

### **1.1.2 Goals**

- To work collaboratively to effectively manage the programs and services of a Virtual Library.
- To enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of resource sharing among Kentucky libraries by utilizing current and emerging technologies.
- To ensure universal access to a robust statewide telecommunications network with adequate to support the delivery of multimedia information resources and services
- To increase access to available electronic resources through cooperative statewide agreements.
- To provide a core collection of digital information resources at lower per unit cost to enhance teaching, learning, research and public services.
- To prepare students, faculty and staff of Kentucky's educational institutions and the citizens of the Commonwealth to be full participants in today's information-based global economy and in the life-long learning process by providing services to develop information literacy.

Information about the KYVL can be obtained at <http://www.kyvl.org/>

The KYVL provides information services to five Community Types:

- 8 state-supported universities, and 16 community and technical college districts organized as the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS)
- 118 public library systems
- 19 private academic libraries
- 1,371 K-12 schools
- 30+ special libraries

## **2 KYVL Portal Vision**

The KYVL has a strong sense of service to all citizens of Kentucky from the youngest to the oldest, whether they are students seeking educational resources on campus, or older adults seeking information at their public libraries.

To that end, the KYVL has contracted with multiple database vendors to provide Kentuckians with a broad range of online information resources. Vendors include EBSCO, OCLC FirstSearch, H.W. Wilson, Grolier, and Proquest.

Access to these resources is provided—at no cost to the individual—through a portal created with OCLC's SiteSearch (WebZ) software.

In order to continue to provide the best level of access possible, KYVL has begun to explore the current range of library portal software. The intent is to use such a product to provide one point of entry for "anytime/anywhere" access to all of the information available through KYVL (including commercial databases, state produced digital collections, library catalogs, proprietary databases, etc).

The mechanism that provides this seamless access should be powerful for the most advanced user and simple for the youngest student; access should be flexible and customizable for application to a variety of environments.

A typical search scenario might be one of a continuing education student taking classes through a community college, but accessing KYVL databases from a campus library, public library, or home.

The KYVL seeks a vendor for a state-wide contract whereby the KYVL can implement a new single, state-wide portal for federating searching of KYVL-created and -provided resources.

The KYVL also intends to offer other institutions and library systems in Kentucky use of the chosen product or product suite in a consortial arrangement. An example of anticipated usage may be a multi-site public library system electing to adopt a co-

branded implementation of the portal software within that library system. Other possible implementations may be within university or college library systems and large school systems where a collaborative, consortial approach provides the best service and economy of scale for the patrons and staff.

## **Vendor Information Request**

### **3 General Overview**

- 3.1 Describe your federated search features. Do they enable access for novice and advanced users to heterogeneous targets with diverse metadata? Do they ensure reliable identical search results between the native and the portal interfaces?
- 3.2 Describe how the portal helps users identify and select one or more targets most useful to their research.
- 3.3 Describe the choices for specifying search queries, manipulating and exporting search results, and navigating among portal functions. Will users be able to move easily between the portal and the 'native' search interface of a target database?
- 3.4 Describe support for personalized user profiles (for session parameters, target selection, saved queries, areas of interest, etc.).
- 3.5 Is the product fully developed and in use at other locations? Please provide examples of its implementation and duration. We are especially interested in consortia implementations.

### **4 Client Requirements (i.e., for an individual end-user)**

The web client must work in a browser-neutral environment on a variety of hardware platforms running various operating systems and must comply with Section 508 (ADA) requirements.

### **5 Searching and Search Results**

- 5.1 Describe how a novice or occasional user will be able to perform information-seeking tasks in an iterative manner using the search history, saved searches, marked metadata records, and linking to full text or other related resources through OpenURL support.
- 5.2 Describe how a novice or occasional user will be able to view search results by target and to merge search results from different targets.

5.3 Describe how a novice or occasional user will be able to save and export selected search result records from one or more queries without additional log-in requirements. Will users be able to email, print, and download records?

## **6 Knowledge Base**

Describe your basic descriptive metadata and configuration information for core target databases, including target title or name, subject terms, publisher, standard identifiers, and supported features such as full text or tables of contents. Also address the usage of the fifteen Dublin Core Metadata Elements within your knowledge database.

6.1 Do you have a knowledge base that is updated online and through batch processes that use update requests expressed in an open format (such as a specified XML schema)? If so, explain.

6.2 Are the contents of your knowledge base exportable in an open format (such as a specified XML schema)? If so, explain.

## **7 Patron Authentication**

7.1 Describe your patron authentication process. Does the architecture allow the use of different methods to authenticate users and recognize various user roles or classes of users?

7.2 Describe how your product allows administrators to configure the set of targets and portal functionalities displayed to an authenticated user based on information about the user and role/class.

7.3 For reasons of security and privacy, the application should support secure user logins and enable institutions to determine what session-specific information will be stored and purged.

## **8 Portal Administration and Vendor Support**

8.1 On which platform was your product developed?

8.2 On which platforms does your product work?

8.3 Describe your ability to locally customize your product for different user communities and “levels” of searchers (expert, skilled, novice). Does it allow local branding, labeling, and search session defaults, and ability to incorporate community-appropriate help and link to digital reference assistance.

- 8.4 Does your portal application provide access to Z39.50 target servers and one or more mechanisms for accessing non-Z39.50 target servers? What other formats and protocols does your product support? What about web services?
- 8.5 Describe any system limitations on the number of simultaneous active retrieval sessions? To what extent will institutions be able to control system processes which impact response time (such as the number of simultaneous sessions and session time-out values)?
- 8.6 Describe how the application interoperates with related library systems and applications, such as integrated library systems, an open URL resolver, ISO interlibrary loan protocol-compliant messaging software, document delivery applications, course management software and ability for single-sign-on.
- 8.7 Describe your administrative tools. Do you provide multiple levels of administration? Describe the various capabilities of administration, including how to add/delete target databases and how to edit the parameters of a database.
- 8.8 Describe how your product provides for complete and robust recovery in case of operating system failure.
- 8.9 Describe both your technical and end-user documentation.
- 8.10 Describe your ability to provide usage statistics and other reporting features.
- 8.11 Describe your support for your clients. How do you provide for timely resolution of a range of system problems? What are your procedures and response mechanisms for handling bug reports and enhancement requests? Describe your assignment of account reps and distribution across regions, states, etc.
- 8.12 The application should be able to control access for different user roles/classes according to target-specific access control agreements.